

STOCKPORT
AND SOUTH
MANCHESTER
CAMRA

OPENING TIMES



No:
159

FREE

JULY 1997

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Full Measure At Last?

The Government's pre-election pledge to implement full-measure legislation, forcing pubs to serve beer in over-sized glasses with a pint line, could be made good sooner than many observers thought after Consumer Affairs Minister Nigel Griffiths backed a private member's bill ensuring full pints for pub customers.

The Weights & Measures (Beer & Cider) Bill comes from Wolverhampton South east Labour MP Dennis Turner but is only 20th on the ballot, which means it has little chance of getting Parliamentary time - in this session at least.

In his statement of support, Mr Griffiths carefully avoided promising the bill Government time but CAMRA believes the bill will almost certainly resurface and might even be given government time.

Mr Griffiths said: "I have been calling for a change in the law for a very long time and am delighted to give my full support to the bill. Down the years I have received many complaints from consumers and trading standards officers, who have reported short measures in contravention even of the industry's own guidance notes.

"A recent survey by CAMRA showed that eight out of 10 pints weren't pints at all. When the consumer asks for a pint and is charged for a pint, that is the quantity that should be served." Support has also come from Stockport MP Ann Coffey who says she is "delighted to give my full support to this Bill, which is a fulfilment of our election promise to give beer drinkers a better deal."

The Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association has put out more scare stories about the supposed cost of serving full pints, claiming that real ale could be under threat, and that it could cost publicans £4000 each to implement the change, adding 10p to the price of a pint. This is pure fantasy.

In fact there need be no added cost at all, and no excuse for price increases:

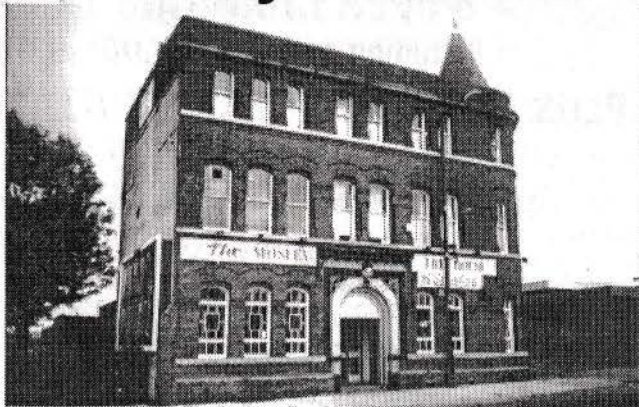
The cost of buying in oversized glasses will be nil provided they are phased in over the normal replacement cycle.

The additional cost of filling an oversized glass to the line is equal to the cost of the beer spilled when filling brim-measure glasses.

Drinkers have been ripped off for too long. The introduction of lined oversized glasses is the only way drinkers can be guaranteed a full and fair pint.

Copies of the award winning Viaducts and Vaults 2 - The Stockport Pub Guide are still available - see Page 12-

Mosely Madness



As briefly reported last month, yet another East Manchester pub closed down last month. This time it was the Mosely, a substantial landmark building on the corner of Ashton Old Road and Rowsley Street.

Originally a Whitbread pub, the Mosely has had numerous owners in recent years and as a result had become somewhat neglected. However it was still structurally sound and served very much as a focus for the local community who made much use of the upstairs function room.

Not that this cut much ice with Enterprise Inns who sold it to the neighbouring Mercedes Benz garage for a reported £52,000. A counter bid by the licensees arrived just a few days too late to save the pub. Its fate is now demolition, despite a 300-name petition from the regulars to save it. What use the site is to be put remains unclear. If any good can be said to come from this sorry tale is that it might just prove a shot in the arm for the nearby Britannia on Rowsley Street which has been struggling for trade in recent times, despite selling a top-notch pint of Lees.

Tetley-Bass Merger Off

New Labour President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett has rejected the proposed Bass Tetley merger, which would have given the combined giant over 40% of the UK beer market, as not being in the interests of consumers or competition. The suggestion that Bass should sell 19% of the pub estate to allow the deal to go through (suggested by the MMC) was also rejected. While this is good news, it is hard to see Carlsberg Tetley's UK brewing interests remaining independent, or intact for long.

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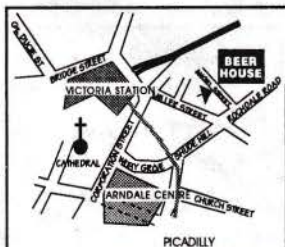
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BREW PUBS

This month we launch another occasional series looking at brewpubs, mainly but not exclusively, in Greater Manchester.

The concept of the 'home brew house', a pub which brews its own beer on the premises, is one that has long captured the imagination of even the most casual pub goer. It is a concept rooted in history as once all beer brewed in Britain was brewed on the premises from which it was sold and it was only with the growth of larger commercial breweries in the 19th century that their long decline began. In 1880 there were still some 12,000 home-brew pubs, a number which dwindled over the next century so that by 1974 there were just four left in the West Midlands, Shropshire and Cornwall. However the real ale revival of the late 1970's was the catalyst for a revival of the craft brewing industry. This saw many new breweries spring up and amongst them was a welcome increase in the number of home brew houses, although nowadays most also supply a limited free trade as well. The North West is well supplied with these ranging from the quaint Masons Arms at Cartmel Fell in the Lake District to the hi-tech Mash & Air in Manchester City Centre. We start our review, however, with one of the longest established, the **Lass O'Gowrie** on Charles Street in the City Centre.

The Lass O'Gowrie is in fact one of the oldest established of the new-wave brew-pubs, not only here in the North West but also nationally, having brewed its first beer in April 1983. This would be no mean achievement on its own but is perhaps even more so when you realise that throughout that time the pub has in fact been owned by none other than Whitbread.

This remarkable degree of continuity must be down to the presence throughout of licensee and brewer Noel 'Joe' Fylan who has been at the helm since day one. The Lass was in fact Joe's first pub, although he had been a caretaker manager in Whitbread pubs for 14 months previously, although it now seems as though he has been there forever.

There have been one or two changes in that time, all of them for the good. The beers are now racked into casks rather than being served from cellar tanks, for example. Apart from that they remain unchanged and are the pub's biggest sellers at 6-8 barrels a week. Malt extract is used along with compressed hops (Styrian Goldings), with years coming from Whitbread's Salmesbury brewery. This may all contribute to the fruity, malty nature of the brews, more akin to a southern style than the hoppy, dry beers which are the historic Manchester type. The two main brews are LOG35 (3.5%) and LOG42 (4.2%), named by local CAMRA stalwart Leo King in a competition run at the pub's launch (the runner-up, Peter Nyland, never collected his pewter tankard prize and this is still held behind the bar at the Lass - are you out there?). These are joined by one or two specials throughout the year, mainly tied in with the comings and goings at the University - when OT called the 5.1% Centurion 'graduation brew' was on sale. The beers are available to other Whitbread pubs as a guest but are rarely seen, although one unlikely outlet has been the Micker Brook 'Brewers Fayre' in Cheadle which, as it happens, is run by Joe's son-in-law.

Ashton Canals Festival

Fri 11th - Sun 13th July

The sunny weekend in July is on its way again and the beer tent is going to be there again to slake many a thirst. This year's range of real ales (and ciders and perries) is better than ever. The regulars - Hydes and Lees - will be there alongside other 'local' brews from Phoenix, Sair Inn, Bank Top and Whim. From further afield come Butterknowle - Banner and High Force, Hart - Nemesis and Cleos Asp, Caledonian - Deuchars IPA, Hambleton - Bitter and Stallion, Kelham Island - Pale Rider and others - 32 different beers in all. At this moment in time the ciders and perries are not known, but you can be assured of a wide and discerning range (as usual). Please come done early on...you will probably want to come back later in the weekend. TJ.



'Joe' Fylan in the brewery at the Lass O'Gowrie

The other major change came in January 1996 when the pub was branded as a 'Hogshead', Whitbread's 'ale house' brand. This resulted in a minor refurbishment and an increase in the number of guest beers available. There is currently a 'Summer Special' promotion with special summer ales from Dent, Burton Bridge, Cains, Ushers and Whitbread featuring and including a summer version of 'The Abroad Cooper' the house beer common to all Hogshead pubs. This new beer will be of a lower gravity and be brewed with 100% pale malt for a lighter colour and extra hops for a more refreshing taste. Look out for it.

The Lass O'Gowrie today also offers real cider, fruit wines (30 or so), Belgian beers and, currently, an interesting range of American bottled beers, too. Food is served from 11.30-2.30. It's usually busy and packed at weekends. When many of its contemporaries have fallen by the wayside the Lass O'Gowrie continues to thrive and has become something of an institution on the local scene. Long may it remain so JC

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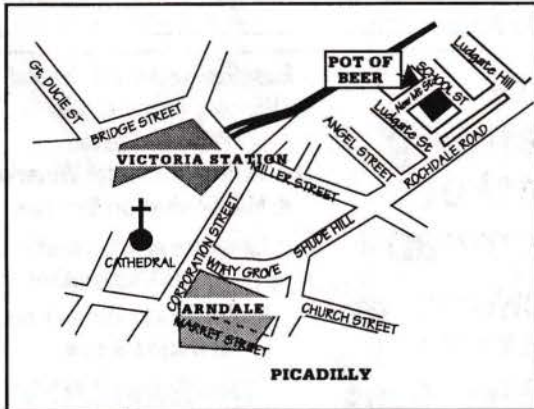
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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STOCKPORT AND
SOUTH MANCHESTER
B R A N C H

JULY

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA Pub of the Month for July is the Grey Horse, a Hydes house on Portland Street in the City Centre.

The Grey Horse has thrived since the arrival of Lil and Noel Duffy who came to the pub from the Little Alex in Moss Side, just a stone's throw from Hydes' brewery. Lil's first task on arrival was to instantly improve the pub by doing away with the hideous green walls favoured by the previous incumbent, and so instantly improving the pub's atmosphere.

There is now a traditional feel to the one-room pub with pale walls, stained timbers and various traditional pictures and plates on the walls. The bar area has been refurbished, too, with a new bar back and pot shelf over the bar.

On the bar handpumps dispense Hydes' mild and bitter, and such is the quality of the beers that the Grey Horse is very likely to reappear in a forthcoming CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

Not only is this a much improved pub, it is also one of the few genuine community pubs in the City Centre offering a welcome for all in a friendly unassuming atmosphere. The warmth of the welcome will no doubt be much in evidence on the presentation night, **Thursday 17th July**, but get there early if you want a seat - it's only a little pub! JH.

The Grey Horse is on Portland Street, just down from the Old Monkey and the Circus. It's only a short walk from both Piccadilly bus and rail stations. **NB the presentation is being made earlier in the month than usual, note the change of date.**

The local branch of CAMRA decide on a Pub of the Month by a democratic vote at the monthly branch meeting.

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OPENING TIMES

LETTERS



From Pete Soane:

Oh dear, oh dear. On a recent visit to the Griffin, Heaton Mersey, I was disappointed to see that the beer was being dispensed through swan neck handpumps with tight sparklers. Now, this method of dispense might be fine for some beers, but with Holts bitter it imparts a sweetness that affects the intense bitterness for which Holts is so well known.

When I asked the barmaid about the swan necks, she said the brewery could no longer obtain parts for the older pumps, something I find hard to believe. So, come on Holts, what's going on?

From Roger Wood:

In reply to Tom Kelly's comments on beer festival hygiene, I was working at Glossop Festival and felt better in the morning for having drunk craft beer such as Whim, the greatest danger to health being the hypothermia which got to some of the staff on the cold spring evening.

On a more serious note, as a festival worker I dislike letting the nozzle of a swan neck sparkler handpump touch an already used glass when serving. I think this is unhygienic and try not to do it. I think swan neck sparklers are unnecessary as well as unhygienic, and when froth spills everywhere it may look romantic but is not necessary for the taste of the beer. Saying that, at least the spillage at festivals is wasted. What happens to the beer spilt down the side of glasses in some of the less reputable pubs using swan necks? I think festival customers are getting a good deal on health.

From Anon:

I am writing in reply to May's reported Stagger around Fallowfield.

The bouncers 'at work' in the Queen of Hearts were ejecting one person, me. The incident revolved around me tipping some coke over the group I had been with all night, from the balcony above. It was simply down to drunken buffoonery.

The bouncers nipped this prank in the bud and showed me the door. I hope that the same people who read or heard about the incident will see this letter and realise that it was (hopefully) an isolated incident. It didn't detract from a genial atmosphere where good music was played and fair beer was sunk.

Keep up the good work.

(It is not normally OT's policy to print anonymous letters but for obvious reasons an exception was made in this case - ed.)

From Peter Skirrey, Sheffield:

I hope you will pass on to your colleagues in Stockport & South Manchester my congratulations on an excellent Beer Festival last weekend.

I am a veteran at Beer Festivals, but this was my first time at Stockport. I have to judge it as one of the friendliest and most efficient events in recent memory. What a great range of beers! - and, in "Vjaducts & Vaults" you have ensured that we shall revisit the area for a crawl in the near future.

Among my strongest impressions (Abbeydale 'Last Rites' excepted!) is the pride which the Stockport locals expressed in their town. This says a lot for it. The fact that we got lost en route back to the station is no reflection on Stockport; plenty on the effect of the ales and our sense of direction!

Keep up the good work! I should also wish County fans all the best for next season in Division 1. As a Wednesday fan, I will be looking for you to take 6 points from Sheffield United!

(Festival Organiser Jim Flynn tells us that this is one of numerous letters and phone calls offering thanks and congratulations on the Beer Festival - ed.)

From Mark Bates, Gorton:

I am writing to inform you of an event which may be of interest to yourselves, in view of the nature of the CAMRA association. The locals of the Hare & Hounds pub, Abbey Hey Lane, Gorton (which has won the coveted Pub of the Month award in recent times) are having a "gentlemen's picnic" on July 5th 1997. The specific reason for this event is to commemorate a similar trip of July 6th 1947 by our predecessors, almost exactly 50 years previously. We are trying to match our trip and its contents to that of the earlier trip with what little details we can gather from the evidence available. What we do know has come mainly from a large photograph taken before the gentlemen left. This photograph has hung on the vault wall since 1947! There are many descendants of the original complement but we are unaware of any living survivors. Some as children vaguely remember seeing their fathers and uncles off, and these will be attending this year.

We shall breakfast in the village of Pilling, Lancashire, as did the original trip, then carry on to Blackpool for the remainder of the day and night. We know that there were seventy-eight original attendees (our trip will be about fifty) and they travelled as the photograph tells us in "three charas".

The photograph is and always has been, a grand feature of the traditional, real ale, vault-oriented pub, and has been the topic of many conversations and, no doubt, arguments, in the past. I do believe it has been mentioned in your publication in the past. It has an almost powerful presence to any new face in our pub. We will be using the services of a professional photographer to attempt to recreate that image, from as near to the spot that the original was taken, for a photograph of our trip to hang on another wall. (Mark has said he will try and let us have a print of the new photo for publication in OT - ed.)

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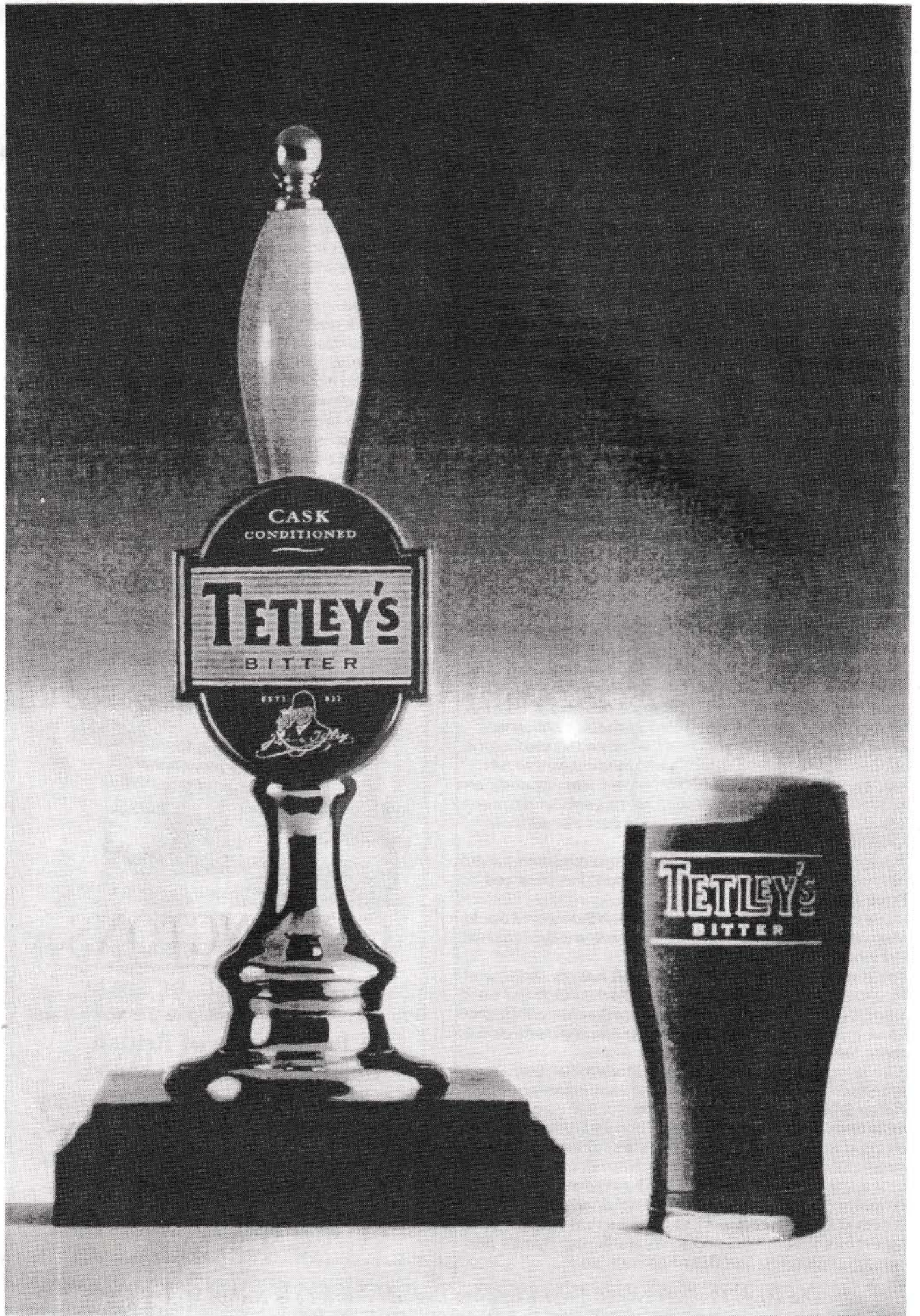
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STAGGER

with Martin Thomas

The sunny delights of Cheadle Hulme awaited us for the beginning of our monthly Stagger, a blissful May evening as we escaped the smog of the city and sampled an evening in tranquil suburbia.

First port of call was the **Cheadle Hulme**, a large Holts pub conveniently close to the rail station, funnily enough, on Station Road. This pub has undergone many changes from its original incarnation as The Junction; today we find two rooms, a vault and lounge, with separate eating area and mahogany decor. Beers available, unsurprisingly, were Holts Bitter and Mild, the Bitter being well received by those sampling it and the Mild attracting slightly less enthusiasm. A fairly mixed crowd ranging from the remnants of some all day drinkers, regulars guarding the bar and the usual Spice Girls and Likely Lads gearing themselves for a fun-packed Friday evening on the town. Altogether a pleasant pub serving as an ideal meeting place for the night's further adventures.

With initial thirsts quenched, a blistering pace was set as we embarked on a nature trail along Ladybrook en route for our next port of call, the **Old Mill**. This large Tetley pub is situated a few hundred metres off Ladybridge Road. Inside there is definitely a rural feel, with the decor reminiscent of a museum of 17th century farming equipment. Huge scythes dangle precariously from the ceiling and a host of ropes and barrels accompany its mock rustic character. An interesting range of guest beers was on offer for us to sample. Apart from Tetley, we had Greene King Abbot Ale, Jennings Bitter, Three Threads and Ind Coope Burton Ale, with the Abbot Ale scoring highly and Jennings gaining some merit. The apparent absence of a price list made the choice harder as the guest beers tended to be on the expensive side. "Big Steaks" were the order of the day for those who are that way inclined, this particular restaurant obviously not a haunt for the local branch of the Vegetarian Society! Separate eating areas gave the pub a family atmosphere and the size of the plates and portions noted by a few hungry looking members of our entourage.

No time for eating though as we pressed ever onwards to our next watering hole, **The Greyhound** at the junction of Ladybridge Road and Councillor Lane. The population of the place trebled as we stumbled through the doorway and to our delight we were offered the choice of Greenalls Mild and Bitter. With the dust duly blown off the half pint glasses by our barman we settled down to admire the delights of this modern split-level establishment. A "new wave" 80's feel to the decor reminded me of night clubs frequented in my younger days, although you assumed the regulars drinking by the pool table weren't here to appreciate the pub's design qualities. The mild scored higher than the bitter although no great excitement was shown for either brew. A swift exit, then for the journey to the **Cross Keys**, just down the road. One of the main points of merit for this Hydes' Anvil pub is the large bowling green to the rear. Inside, though, our less active crowd found great pleasure in the excellent examples of the Hydes' Anvil range - on offer was the Mild, Bitter and Billy Westwood's, all of which scored highly and on average proved to be the most popular drinks of the evening. The bitter was especially good - no complaints here, I believe! The only complaint being the presence of a Hydes' Smooth Flow font. The pub itself has recently been refurbished and redecorated and now has a sports club feel with an island bar, separate drinking areas, a vault and eating area. A good atmosphere and pleasant staff made this visit a very enjoyable experience.

Alas, we couldn't stay all night, our hectic schedule meant we supped up and shipped out to the next pub, **The Wembley** in Adswold. No sign of depressed Middlesbrough fans, though, as we neared this large and impressive pub. A juxtaposition of mock Tudor and 1930's architecture dominate the exterior, the doorway being especially grand with evidence of a revolving doorway in place at sometime. Inside there is somewhat of an ambiguous feel to the place especially between the ornate glass dome above the bar area and the sunken video lounge entitled "The Drunkard's Den". The classic rock on the jukebox and pool tables give it a down to earth but enjoyable atmosphere, obviously not one for the white stiletto and silk shirt brigade though! The choice of beer on offer was limited to Wilson's Bitter and Mild with neither scoring particularly well on this visit.

A convenient bus stop (SG 0733 for those who are interested) sheltered us before the short ride to the **Adswold Hotel**. This excellent

Robinsons pub had both the Best Bitter and Hatters Mild on offer, with the bitter scoring slightly higher than the mild on this occasion. The decor is somewhat contrasting with an emphasis on all things equine, especially of the Shire variety. The lounge is dominated by an impressive array of paintings and horse shoes, and around the bar a large collection of ornamental shire horses. The layout of the pub consists of a comfortable lounge with a large curved bar and a separate and untouched vault. Outside I am assured is a superb beer garden for those odd days when the sun may be shining. I also noted the presence of pickled eggs, although I resisted this particular delicacy on this visit. Our last place of worship on this stagger was **Copperfields** off Adswold Lane. An open-plan, modern pub is as far as my beer-stained notes describe this particular place. Through the haze I do remember a mahogany decor, a relaxed, quiet (apart from our inebriated selves, of course) atmosphere and evidence of value for money food. The sounds of the football team's award ceremony and party were drifting through the adjacent rooms as we sampled the beers on offer. These included Robinsons Bitter, Theakstons Best and Wilson's Mild, with the Mild scoring the highest of the lot. Keen prices are a noteworthy and welcome feature. Unfortunately, last orders had to mark the end of the fun, but there's always next month to look forward to. Why don't you join us for an evening of interest beer, pubs and company at the next Stagger? I'll see you there.

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by Andrew Summer

Off the beaten track this month, we visit the Stag Inn at Dufton, which is situated a few miles from the splendid market town of Appleby-in-Westmorland (easily reached by train from Manchester and surrounding areas). For the energetic, Dufton can be reached by walking from Appleby although you may prefer a taxi. Sadly, buses to Dufton are rare and ill-suited to pub-going.

An unassuming but handsome building of local sandstone, the Stag Inn has a long history of serving ale dating back to 1703. Licensee Cecil Coxan and his wife Helen first discovered the pub when lost in the car; fortunately they were looking to enter the pub trade at the time and haven't looked back since taking the pub over five years ago. The pub is a focal point for the village and is well liked and used by locals. One of them, Colin Strong, was born in the pub (his parents owned it at the time) and rumour has it he hasn't left since!

Up until about 30 years ago, the beer was brought up from the cellar in jugs and the pub was a simple village alehouse, full of character. However, years of Whitbread ownership subsequently took their toll and Cecil and Helen had plenty of hard work to do to restore the three-roomed pub's native charm of the days when it was owned by the now long-closed Glassons Brewery of Penrith.

The range of real ale sold, too, is now better than under Whitbread and during the summer months four real ales are available. Firstly Boddies Bitter which, although not too exciting is always enjoyable



and well-kept. Secondly, Cecil serves up Black Sheep Best Bitter - which is so popular with the locals that he is considering offering the other beers brewed by Black Sheep - Special and the superb Riggwelter. At present, though, the remaining two ales are supplied by local micro-breweries which Cecil is keen to support. During the winter months the number of real ales drops to two to reflect the drop in custom.

The pub offers accommodation with Bed & Breakfast available from £18.50-£20.00 per night per person; an adjacent cottage is also available for rent - early booking is essential as it is very popular. As the pub is close to the Pennine Way and glorious fell-walking country, walkers make up a large part of Cecil's passing trade and mingle well with the locals to ensure there is always a good atmosphere within the pub. As you enter directly on your right is a splendid Victorian kitchen range dated 1852; settled in its warm glow with pint in hand, you could almost imagine the famous "AW" joining you...

Cecil is enthusiastic about his pub and his beer and is open to new ideas regarding both; for example, he will do his best to try the wares of a new micro-brewery if his regulars give it a favourable mention. The quality of the beer is evidence enough for his scrupulous cellarmanship, and has been rewarded with a listing in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide. This has led to a healthy expansion in sales since he took the pub over; from an average of 81 barrels a year, it's now up to 200. An encouraging figure for a smallish pub in a remote village.

When Cecil and Helen took over, the only food served was sandwiches, but they have built the food trade up and now the pub offers a good, wide selection of hot and cold food including many local specialities, all of which can be found listed on the chalkboard. And if you're passing between 7.30 and 9.30am (setting out onto the fells, perhaps) you can pop in for a pub breakfast, though regrettably no ale is available to wash down your bacon and eggs! The pub holds a full children's certificate and dogs are welcome as long as they bring their owners with them. Cecil has one firm belief at the Stag Inn - "you change to the locals' ideas and not vice-versa" - which, in the days of the corporate pub, is a refreshing attitude. Nestling in an idyllic setting behind Dufton Pike - popular with fell runners - the beer garden is superb in the summer, as long as you don't mind sharing with the pub's Shetland ponies.

The Stag Inn may well be off the beaten track, but combined with a trip on the Settle-Carlisle railway line, or perhaps a holiday in the area, it's well worth a pint or six.

Fell Runners Train at the Bar

Three days after the close of Stockport Beer Festival, some of the bar staff showed the benefit of their Festival training by taking part in the 6-mile long Kettlethulme Fell Race. Although finishing a fair way down the field, bar staff Peter Powell (Stockport Harriers), John Taylor (Pennine Fellrunners) and Robin Wignall (Altrincham AC) all completed the course with its 800 feet of ascent. Another finisher was customer and branch founder member Dave Hall who now lives in Macclesfield. Surely Stockport Beer Festival is unique with its athletic bar staff.

8



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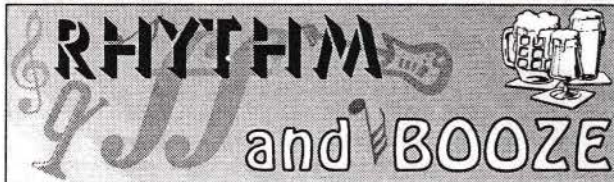
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CAMRA Pub of the Month
March 1997



RHYTHM and BOOZE



Stockport has for a long time been famous for its thriving, vibrant live music scene concentrated around the Market Place. Great though this is, this has been at some cost, and this cost has largely been borne by the majority of Stockport's other pubs not on the circuit. If you didn't know already, Rhythm & Booze can now reveal that one pub is now fighting back, by trying to break the effective stranglehold of the market place pubs and putting on good live music most nights of the week, with (of course) real ale thrown in for good measure.

One of the best liked and most professional musicians that Stockport can boast is John Brett. Most regular visitors to the Market Place will know John for his regular appearance in local bands. Over the years the list has grown so long that it is impossible to list them all but to name a few he plays regularly in the Removal Men, the Best Band and occasionally with Norman Beaker's Band. As an established local musician when John told OT that the Bowling Green on Charles Street (just off the top end of Hillgate) was now going for live music in a big way, it was time to take a look.

The Bowling Green offers free live music usually five nights a week. This does vary depending on the availability of bands but a good rule of thumb is that you can usually find something on Wednesday to Sunday nights inclusive. The emphasis is towards the R'n'B/rock/blues end of the spectrum as this is what pulls in the crowds. However, early in the week more laid back entertainment, such as acoustic guitar duos, features, giving a welcome break from TV or the mandatory chart crap found on most pub juke boxes.

The Bowling Green is an Innpreneur (ie ex-Wilsons) pub and as such has for a long time only offered either no real ale or, in recent times, just the lack-lustre Websters Bitter. However, the Websters

has now been joined by Grays Bitter or Grays Premium (which are believed to be Mansfield Bitter and Old Baily in disguise), good beers at value prices, too - £1.20 for the Grays Bitter when OT called. For as long as I can remember, good music and good quality real ale have mixed together about as well as oil and water. To some extent that is still true, but make no mistake about it, the Bowling Green tries hard to make the best of what it's got and as such all beers are served as well as they can be, even the Websters!

The band when I called was Hired Gun, a four piece band from Buxworth, near Chinley, comprising of Alan Arthur (lead guitar), Gary Townsend (gtr/vocals), Dave Harris (bass/vocals), and John Clark (*no relation! - ed*) (drums), or rather half of Hired Gun (Gary and Dave) and half of another band, the Bikini Brothers (Alan and John). The members of the two bands are interchangeable and for gigs they tend to perm any four from eight, apart from Gary who always does the gig irrelevant of the name of the band.

They launched into the first of two sets covering a range of familiar classics, with such gems as Mustang Sally, Whisky in the Jar, Framed and I Shall Be Released. Initially the audience were sceptical and low in number but as the set progressed both enthusiasm and numbers increased. More classics followed, with Van Morrison's Moondance, The Who's Substitute and Dylan's Knocking On Heaven's Door. Alan produced blistering guitar riffs in Thin Lizzy's The Boys are Back in Town, whilst Gary's vocals really tore out, producing versions of Twist And Shout and Substitute as good, if not better than the originals. The last few numbers left the band with cries for yet another encore and leaving a very content group of pub-goers to meander home.

Stockport pub-goers are indeed lucky to have such a number of good music pubs in which they can enjoy live music from so many talented local bands. The Bowling Green is a welcome addition to their number - with both residences and one-off appearances. Check out Sunday nights where the Removal Men, Perfect Strangers, Cold Shot and Fat Cat Bobby rotate on a weekly basis with the reformed Mega Band appearing when there is a fifth Sunday in the month! Get down there soon.

9



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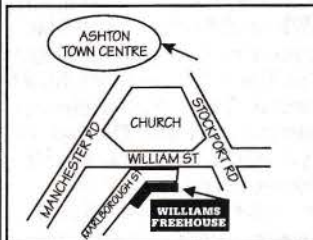
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Sorry, no Munich again.... Well actually of course Munich is very much still there, AND I've just come back (again) but the editor has crammed me into a tiny corner again, AND ordered me to publicise the Olympia shindig. so -

The Great British Beer Festival

This year, CAMRA's biggest beer festival, the Great British Beer Festival, is extending from the Grand Hall at Olympia into the National Hall next door as well. Built in Victoria's reign these magnificent halls both have glass ceilings and give a grandeur to the drinking experience of the year.

Having two separate halls has allowed the Festival to have music in one hall only so that those who prefer not to drink to music can get away from it all. The softest music of the week will probably come from the Chaminade String Quartet on Tuesday night. There will be comedy on Wednesday evening; jazz will dominate on Thursday and Steeleye Span are playing on Friday evening. There is also a pub quiz on Saturday afternoon for something completely different. So there should be some entertainment that will please everyone. The Great British Beer Festival boasts 300 real ales from all over Britain. Again the beers will be in regional areas so that you can drink beers from as far apart as Yorkshire, Scotland, Wales and the West Country without leaving the hall. For those who enjoy alcohol made from fruit, there are around 40 ciders and perries, all traditionally produced from apples and pears respectively. And there will be a selection of imported fruit beers amongst the 100 imported beers. These beers are split into three bars and as well as Belgian, Dutch and Czech beers there will also be unique ales from the USA. As with all CAMRA beer festivals, the Great British Beer Festival is proud to say that it serves a full pint due to the fact that it uses oversized lined glasses. So why not pop along for a pint or two, you won't be disappointed!

The Festival takes place between Tuesday 5th and Saturday 9th August at Olympia, London. phew...

A word on the US bottled beer festival at the Hogsheads (High St Mcr and Lass O'Gowrie (see page 3). I have been mightily surprised and impressed. Western US 'craft' brewing means water, malt, hops yeast and nowt else. They know their stuff too! In a blind tasting I would not have known the Dog Day 'Kolsch' style brew was from Aspen rather than Cologne and their various dark styles are first rate Alt and Dunkel replicas. If you have deep pockets - the only snag - try the Railyard Ale (Aspen), Red Banshee and Whistlepin, and the summery Portland Honey Beer. The more commonly available St Stans Amber and Petes Wicked Summer Ale are also good. Munich next time....definitely ...(with map!).

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Sowing Dragon's Teeth

There's been a lot of hysteria about alcopops recently, and in the past I've had some harsh words to say about them myself. However, those of us who wish to promote pubs and beer must be careful of being too ready to jump on this particular band wagon, as much of it comes from groups who are opposed to alcoholic drinks in general, and see alcopops as an easy target to latch on to. If we are to be critical of these drinks, we must make sure that this is not on the grounds that they're alcoholic as such, but that they're products of no intrinsic worth which are aimed at under-age drinkers.

Over the past twenty years, the drinks industry has enjoyed a more liberal climate than at any time in the previous century. Licensing hours have been extended, the rate of duty, although still too high, has fallen in real terms, alcohol is much more freely available in supermarkets and off-licences, and the range of both type and the strength of drinks has greatly increased, particularly in the field of beer. Many of these are things that CAMRA welcomes and has campaigned vigorously to bring about.

Unfortunately, this new-found freedom has been abused by certain sections of the industry. They have introduced new categories of drinks, first high-strength designer ciders, now alcopops, which are products totally devoid of character and integrity and which, despite their protestations, are unashamedly targeted at impressionable young people, including the under-18s, with the aim of getting them legless as quickly and painlessly as possible. They have forgotten that, in the past, they had to work long and hard to establish an image of being a responsible and public-spirited business. They are now putting all this in jeopardy.

They have been attacked for this by their own self-regulatory watchdog, the Portman Group (a body, incidentally, which takes much the same view as CAMRA on "responsible drinking"). However, this good advice has, by and large, been recklessly ignored in the drive for short-term profit. The drinks industry are creating a dangerous hostage to fortune, which is likely to come back to haunt them.. In the future, when there may be a harsher regulatory environment and a more hostile climate of public opinion - and there are already signs today of a shift in that direction - the irresponsible marketing of designer ciders and alcopops may be something they come to bitterly regret.

Real as a Plastic Leprechaun

I see that our local Hydes pubs are now offering "Harp Irish Lager". Now, I suppose I understand what they're getting at - that this is the same recipe and strength of Harp as that sold in Ireland. But what recommendation is that anyway? Ireland may be renowned for its stout, but it doesn't exactly spring to mind as a country with a tradition of lager brewing. In any case, this beer isn't really Irish in the first place, as it's brewed under licence in the UK. It's about as authentic as a Scottish Cheddar which turns out to have been made in Limerick - or, for that matter, the proverbial Irish three-pound note.

5 Years Ago

by Phil Levison

JULY '92

On the front page was a reprint from "What's Brewing", headed Know What You Drink - it suggested that beer drinkers would soon know what went into their pints if proposals being considered in Brussels became law. If the Council of Ministers gave their approval, brewers would have to publish a list of the ingredients in their beers by June 1994. This labelling for alcoholic drinks was first tabled by the European Commission in 1979, but as long ago as 1974, CAMRA made a submission to the Food Standards Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture; in 1976 the FSC recommended that prepacked beer should "bear a list of ingredients in descending order of proportion by weight." (In 1997, nothing has yet happened, so this ingredients listing has become one of CAMRA's longest running campaigns).

CAMRA's annual national price survey had just been completed - once again the North West retained the cheapest beer (especially in Manchester) with an average of 116p per pint against some 144p for London and the South East. Yorkshire was next cheapest at 118p per pint.

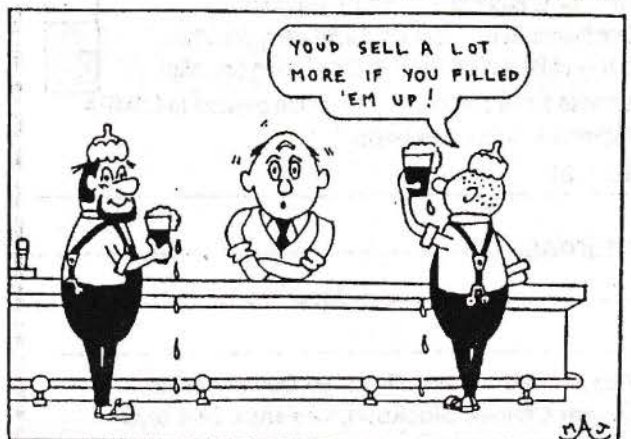
There was a big thank-you to all readers who turned up and made the 6th Stockport Beer Festival a great success. The beer lasted until closing time on Saturday night, but the cider and perry had sold out by 9.30.

Each year CAMRA dedicates the month of July to celebrating the role of the independent brewery in our brewing tradition. In fact it was the buying up and closing down of these self-same independents to form the keg-orientated (now lager orientated) national brewing combines that was one of the main driving forces behind the foundation of CAMRA, back in 1971. Manchester was, and remains, fortunate in having retained a good local brewing tradition, represented by Robinsons, Holts, Hydes, Lees from the old-established concerns and a host of newer operations such as Phoenix at Heywood. Apart from the brewing of high quality real ales, the local independents were, and again remain, at the front of the battle to keep prices down.

Completed alterations/extensions were noted at two well-known but very different establishments in the area - in Didsbury, there was a new look for Whitbread's Olde Cock, and in Heaton Mersey, Holt's had added a much-needed extension to their popular Griffin. In both cases, the general comments were extremely favourable (which isn't always the case). The Olde Cock had emerged from its revamp without looking just like another run of the mill big brewery refurbishment - it even had the feel of a tenancy rather than a managed house. At the Griffin, it was reported that Holt's had gone to quite extraordinary lengths to match the character and detail of the original bar in the older part of the pub.

MITCH

© 1997 BY MARK A JONES



The Marie Pub Co.

This is a name that few Opening Times readers will be familiar with and yet it is making a growing mark on the local pub scene.

The man behind it is Nigel Eastwood, licensee of the Park on Newbridge Lane, Stockport. The Park is certainly one of the best run pubs in Stockport and has a special place in the hearts of local drinkers as being possibly the first national brewers pub to feature Holts Bitter as a guest beer - it was on the bar by midday on the first possible day it could be sold, way back in 1989, and has remained a firm favourite in the pub ever since.

Not that Nigel has been there that long. He took over with his mother in December 1992 and this was their first pub. Sadly Nigel's mother passed away in January this year and it is in her memory that the company is named, having been borne out of discussions they had late last year, shortly before she fell ill.

The second pub taken on was the White Lion in Disley which came into the fold on 21 February, and like all the other 'Marie' pubs is held on a long lease. A major, and much needed, refurbishment started at the White Lion on 23 June and a spend of some £85,000 will see the pub transformed. The aim is to turn it into a similar operation to the Park and will feature Wilsons Bitter and Holts Bitter, both on handpump. The appearance of Holts Bitter in most of the pubs taken on is something of a trademark, in fact.

Next along came the Whitton Chimes at Northwich, taken over on 27 March. This is a town centre pub and so is a slightly different animal to the other two. Again a major refurbishment is in the pipeline, this time in the £35-40,000 range and is due to start in mid-July. Again the cask beers will be Wilsons Bitter and Holts Bitter - the only outlet for Holts in Northwich, in fact, which should bet the drinkers flocking in.

The latest addition is the Ducie Bridge in Manchester City Centre, on Corporation Street, opposite the CIS. A more modest spend of £10-15,000 has spruced up the pub immeasurably and early results are very good indeed, from a pub that had been closed for some months. Trade is primarily lunchtime and white collar and for this reason, Nigel explains, Holts doesn't feature, the two cask beers being Theakstons and Wilsons (it is also unclear whether Holts would supply the Ducie as it is in close proximity to their own

Crown & Cushion). Given the pub's location there is perhaps scope for a changing guest beer here to

enable the pub to realise its full potential, but time will tell. What the Ducie does have is a major food operation, "Marie's Table" - which could ultimately feature in some of the other outlets - under the supervision of a top chef. Food will also be available early evening, particularly when there is an event at the Nynex Arena. Over a superb pint of Holts (Nigel is only one of two Stockport holders of the Matthew Brown Master Cellarman Award, the other being Bob Dickinson at the excellent Woolpack) we asked Nigel if he wasn't apprehensive at taking all these pubs on Inntrepreneur leases which, it must be said don't have a good reputation in the trade - Nigel, however, is more than happy with the situation. The key seems to be spotting the right pub and negotiating sensible terms. Pretty obvious, you might think, but plenty of other, less canny, operators have come a cropper.



Indeed, expansion is planned. There are two more potential outlets in the pipeline and the ultimate aim is to have ten pubs. A mega spend is also planned for the Park itself which is to have a huge extension on the back, almost as big as the current pub. This will form a major games room including two pool tables, a full-size snooker table, table football etc. Above this, depending on planning permission, will either be a function room or a beer garden on the roof! Work should start later this year, all being well.

The success of the Marie Pub Co. is well deserved and is proof positive that all that many pubs need is some care and attention. Too many are prepared to write them off, luckily for the beer drinking public Nigel Eastwood knows better. We'll keep you posted on future developments. JC.

12

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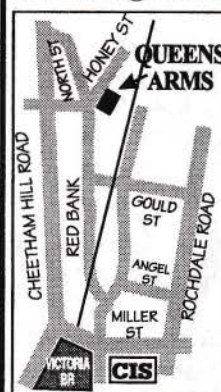


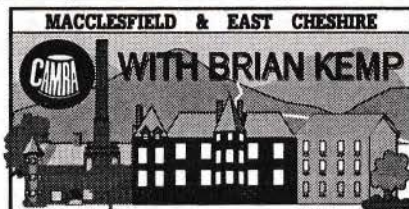
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**The Travellers Rest, Coronation Street,
Macclesfield**

Writing these little pen pictures of the pubs of Macclesfield and East Cheshire is becoming increasingly difficult as some pubs do not have much you can say about them. But undaunted I am persevering and last Sunday lunchtime said to my mentor, Jim, "Where do you suggest next?" and the Travellers Rest was the consensus of opinion. As luck would have it we were only a short walk away at the time so an immediate sight survey was decided upon and who should we chance upon inside but Tony Siddons who turned out to have spent much of his childhood growing up in one of the adjoining terraced cottages. Much of the content of this piece is courtesy of Tony's recollections.

The Travellers Rest is a large Robinsons pub standing on the corner of Cross Street and Coronation Street just to the south of the town centre. Unless you are familiar with Macclesfield, the most useful instruction is to take the main road to Leek from the traffic lights at Park Green in the town centre and you will find the Travellers Rest after about half a mile on your right. If you approach on the new Silk Road by-pass, keep following the signs for Leek and you will pass it on the right. It consists principally of two large lounge areas with Hatters Mild and Best Bitter available in one on handpumps and the other on electric pumps. Both are excellent. It was included in the Good Beer Guide for a few years but I think was eventually left out when it changed hands. However it is in good hands with current landlord, Nick Wood. It was built as a replacement for a previous pub in the early 1930's when, in order to retain its licence under the licensing laws of the time, service was maintained in a shed erected on the parking area at the back. Soap opera fans may be interested to know that the entire original cast of 'Corrie' attended and participated in a darts evening shortly after the series began. Apparently an autographed certificate used to hang on the wall as testimony to the event but has long-since disappeared. We were musing on Sunday over which coronation the street was named in memory and from the age of this part of town, think it must have been Queen Victoria.

The pub offers a popular, good value lunchtime menu on weekdays and unusually for a Macclesfield pub also offers bed and breakfast accommodation which is extremely good value and I understand of excellent quality, and not surprisingly very popular. If you are looking for a good pub in this part of town you need look no further than the Travellers Rest.

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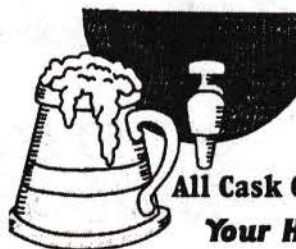
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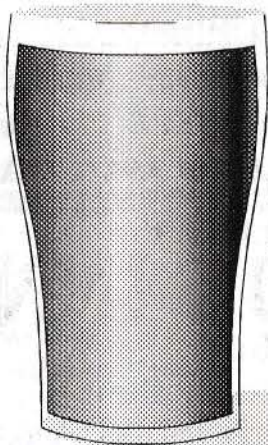
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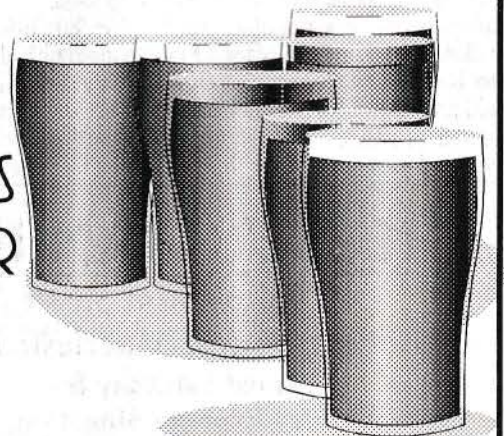
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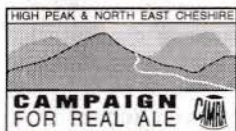
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JULY
Featured Pub:
Dog & Partridge,
Bridgemont

The Dog & Partridge is in Bridgemont, between Whaley Bridge and Furness Vale on the main A6 road, by the roundabout which marks the start (or end) of the Chapel-en-le-Frith bypass. It stands on a small truncated length of what used to be the A6 road, amongst a cluster of stone terraced houses that is Bridgemont. The bypass has moved the main road, and the traffic, a few hundred yards further away.

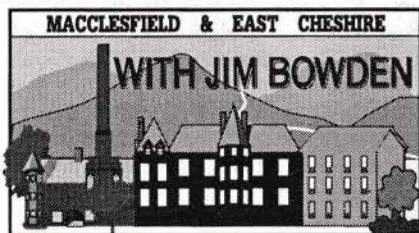
Being stone built, the pub is in perfect keeping with its surroundings, and its interior is both relaxing and welcoming with real fires, a comfortable lounge area and a particularly nice stone-flagged bar area. There is also an excellent restaurant with an inventive and varied menu, and a good range of bar snacks. A beer garden, with some good hill views, completes the picture.

The beers are Tetley Mild, Bitter, Ind Coope Burton Ale and a guest beer - Charles Wells Bombardier at the time of writing, all on handpump..

There are also some imaginative events at the pub, forthcoming examples being a 'Spanish Night', 'Jugglers, Unicycles and Fire Eaters' and 'Clog Dancers'.

All in all, this is a pub that is definitely worth a visit. Car travellers have no problems; those on public transport can take the short walk, along the main road from either Furness Vale or Whaley Bridge railway stations on the Manchester-Buxton line and the Trent bus services 198 and 199 (Stockport-Buxton) stop close by.

Opening hours are: Monday-Thursday 11.0-3.00 and 5.00-11.00; Friday/Saturday 11.00-11.00; Sunday 12.00-10.30. **TL**.



The landladies of the **Royal Oak**, Pickford Street, have moved to Toads in Bollington,

The landlord of the Barnfield, a Robinsons house, is leaving the trade.

J D Wetherspoon, the pub chain, have expressed an interest in the Majestic Cinema, which has been up for sale for many years. If they obtain planning and licence permission this would make a welcome addition to the Macclesfield pub scene.

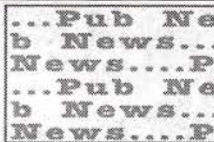
The landlord of the Chain & Gate, North Rode, has apparently been evicted and the pub put up for sale by Marstons.

The landlord of the **St Dunstons**, Langley, a Marstons house, has left.

The Pack Horse Bowling Club, which is private, has four excellent beers on handpump - Banks's Mild, Timothy Taylors Landlord, Marstons Bitter and Pedigree, all in fine form, too.

The **Railway View**, as well as serving a fine range of cask ales, now also sells two imported Czech lagers, Budweiser Budvar and Gambrinus, both on draught.

The return rail fare to Macclesfield from Stockport is only £1.60 after 6.30 in the evening. What a superb excuse, as if one were needed, to try the delights of the Waters Green (opposite the station), Castle, Railway View, Sun, Boarhound etc, etc...



WITH TIM JONES



In Hayfield, the **Sportsman** (Thwaites) no longer has Scrumpy Jack on a dodgy (false) handpump. The Scrumpy Jack has actually gone altogether leaving plenty of room for the handpumps serving the excellent Thwaites beers - Bitter, Mild, Daniel's Hammer and Chairmans.

Down the road at the **Kinder Lodge**, the Burton Ale was not available. Our suspicious reporter enquired as to whether this was to be permanent, but the landlady was not forthcoming. We'll keep the expectant drinking public informed as to whether the Burton Ale has been removed - or they were just changing the barrel. (Not much news this month...oh, you guessed!)

In Hyde, the Beer Engine is now the **Clarendon** again - the floor boards have gone and carpet has returned. Sadly the real ale went with the flooring - only keg now available.

In Glossop a one-man campaign against real ale seems to be underway. The **Corner Cupboard** recently removed all handpumps and the landlord was overheard espousing the merits of free-flow/smooth/creamy/ keg beers. Well, he's moved to the **Globe** on High Street West (Stones/Theakstons) and within days of taking over...guess what? Yep! The handpumps were gone. More smoothflow. Yum! Yum! Mind you, if you run a free house and need some more pumps...

Penultimately, on a recent trip to the Hart Brewery on the Fylde (high Peak Branch actually reached the brewery!), we were taken to the Shard Bridge Inn. Superb location, excellent range of beers - including the full range of Hart. As if this was not encouragement enough to sample these brilliant beers, an added incentive was Holts Bitter being sold at £1.62! Seriously - a good pub serving excellent real ale at reasonable prices in the most part.

Finally, a sad bit of news. The **Tollemache** in Mossley said goodbye to the long serving and excellent licensees Margaret and Trevor Booth last month. Margaret has retired after 38 years behind the bar and an almost complete sweep of Good Beer Guides (only missing out the very first). The Tollemache has been taken over by the licensees from the Napoleon in Ashton-u-Lyne and while we wish their predecessors well in their retirement, we hope that the Tollemache will continue to serve great Robinsons for another 38 years.

Rhys Jones adds: the **Stable Gate** on Manchester Road South, Denton (next to the M57/M66 junction), is now open with Boddingtons Bitter, Marstons Pedigree, and Morlands Old Speckled Hen on handpump. Whitbread's standard Brewers' Fayre interior has if anything less character than the nearby Sainsbury's.

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This month 'Tatton' concludes his look at the pubs of Wilmslow, starting with:

The Blue Bell, Manchester Road - a two-room pub that has been extensively altered over recent years and now with a central bar serving a rear vault and a lounge facing the main road. This has resulted in awkwardly shaped, oversized rooms that lack any real level of intimacy, which is especially noticeable when the pub is quiet. Very much an estate-type pub serving its local community. Beers are just Boddingtons Bitter and Tetley Bitter but I should stress that on all my visits both have been at least average and often good. This is one of the few pubs in Wilmslow that doesn't sell food and as such deserves a degree of support. There is a small stage in the lounge for live acts on Friday and Sunday evenings.

Horse & Jockey, Gravel Lane (South West end) - another estate pub catering predominantly for locals rather than the business fraternity. To this end it is closed on (at least some) weekday lunchtimes as trade is slow. This may be why it has survived very much intact in terms of its turn of the century splendour. One of the few sacrifices to modern times in recent years

has been the opening up of the interior rooms to allow better access to the central bar. Despite this, the pub still manages to retain its multi-roomed character and also has some noteworthy etched glass windows. Beers are Greenalls Mild, Bitter and Original - I have tried the latter two on my visits and on each occasion both were comfortably above average. This pub leaves visitors with the impression that it is a clean, well-run pub and deserves wider recognition.

Kings Arms, junction Alderley Road (A34) and Knutsford Road (B5086) - this pub seems to be both used and run by senior citizens, at least at lunchtimes. The beer isn't cheap with Robinsons Best Bitter at £1.50 and which has never been better than poor on my visits. Food starts at £3 but is mostly in the £3.50-£4 range. I recently had one of the worst meals for a long time here when my fish and chips more re-

sembled a cremated offering to the gods. This may be about to change, though, as the pub now sports a banner advertising Thai food - I believe it has obtained the franchise from the nearby Royal Oak in Alderley Edge to sell this in the sizeable restaurant attached to the pub - in evenings only. The pub itself has been 'Robinsonised' in the recent past and is accordingly devoid of any real character.

Kings Head, Manchester Road - this is a Robinsons pub just north of the town on Wilmslow Road, at the top of the hill leading into the town centre. The current licensees took over in January this year and were faced with a pub that had been seriously underperforming. It had the unenviable distinction of closing every weekday lunchtime because in Wilmslow "there is just not enough trade to merit opening". I find that difficult to believe, as do the current licensees who now open every session. From a quiet start trade is slowly building up and the pub looks to have a promising future. The choice of food is limited but is good quality and inexpensive for the area. Robinsons Best Bitter and Hatters Mild are available and both have been good on my visits. Unfortunately the Robinsons architects have also had a go at this one and so the interior lacks character.

New Inn, Alderley Road - Many years ago no doubt a small, multi-roomed pub, but over the years extended and modernised several times to become a one room lounge concentrating at lunchtime on the side of the business that rakes in the money - food. The menu is both extensive and pricey but invariably the meals are of good quality. The recipe seems successful as the pub is often packed at lunchtime. The beer is good, too with Hydes' Light, Bitter and Billy Westwood's all on top form. The licensee comes from the Railway in Altrincham who, despite getting the pub in the Good Beer Guide was disposed of by Marstons when they converted their best tenancies to management. For my money one of the best pubs in Wilmslow.

Rectory, Station Road - a large building set back off Station Road in its own grounds with the emphasis of the operation more on the wine bar/restaurant end of the market. The decor is standard for this type of venture with a mixture of flagged and wooden floors, high ceilings, coloured glass and implausible ornaments. Whilst the Rectory sports two handpumps (with pumpclips) suggesting two cask beers may be available, I have only ever seen one in operation. This dispenses Draught Bass at £1.70 the quality of which has varied between undrinkable and good. The staff seem oblivious to the art of serving a decent and full pint of beer, to such an extent that presenting customers with a glass of mud goes unnoticed. Dare to complain and they look at you as if you come from another planet. The food is well presented - if you don't mind a long wait. On my first visit I waited 45 minutes for a sandwich and on my second, 40 minutes for a chicken fillet. And this was midweek when the place was relatively quiet. Whilst I waited three couples on adjoining tables came, gave up and went, rather than wait any longer to be served. Poorly trained staff, erratic cellarman'ship and inordinate waiting times are hardly likely to help the Rectory realise its full potential. Come on, Greenalls, get a grip!

Rifleman's Arms, Moor Lane - Boddingtons estate pub selling Boddingtons Bitter, built around the forties (?) with vault and lounge. Little looks to have been done to the pub in the intervening years, probably because it is sufficiently distant from Wilmslow town centre not to be able to command a good lunchtime trade and too remote for everyone other than those living on the adjoining estate. Food is not served and Boddingtons Bitter has been average.

Swan, Swan Street - an 'ale house' type operation which has sold some pretty poor beer but which has much improved under a relief licensee who has applied for the post of permanent manager at the pub. At copy date Greenalls still hadn't made up their minds about this, when the decision should be obvious, quick and straightforward. Food is standard fare and noticeably cheap for the area.

Wilmslow Flyer, Dean Row Road - in many ways this is an unusual pun as it appears to be a converted single story building with features more akin to a bungalow than a pub. Large leaded glass windows give a good view of the unfenced garden but add to the unpublike feel. Electrically pumped Banks's Bitter at £1.48 and handpumped Marstons Pedigree at £1.70 are the cask beers and both have proved excellent, despite unwelcome competition on the bar from Banks's 'smooth' keg bitter. Meals are available lunchtime and early evening with pries at around £4 for a main meal.



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MANCHESTER MATTERS

The Ducie Bridge on Corporation Street in the City Centre is open again, pleasantly refurbished with plenty of bric-a-brac, and initially selling just Wilson's Bitter on handpump. At the outset, trade has principally been lunchtime and early evening business from nearby offices, not least the CIS; but if the spare handpump were to sell a guest beer (keenly priced Holts perhaps?), the place would surely become a welcome additional call in the "Beer Quarter" (see also separate feature - ed).



by Rhys Jones

The month's other City Centre opening, Cafe Racer on Charles Street, sells no real ale.

In Wythenshawe, the Cornishman on Cornishway has been bought by Banks's - news of the beer range next month, when I've had a chance to visit. Banks's Longsight at Belle Vue has a new licensee, and Bitter is now served by handpump, and is joined by (also handpumped) Camerons Strongarm. Last time Strongarm was tried here, slow sales forced its early withdrawal; but it's a fine beer, and I wish it better luck this time. This being Banks's, oversized lined glasses have of course been retained.

In West Gorton, the Dolphin, only recently reopened, was closed for a week or more last month; I am not yet clear whether this is a permanent closure. And at the Brewers in Fallowfield,

the standard range now appears to be Boddingtons Bitter, Castle Eden Ale and Fullers London Pride, all on handpump - the days of a changing and extended range seem to have vanished.

Finally, it gives me no pleasure to report that the £2 pint of real cider has arrived in Manchester - at the Hogshead in the City Centre, Bulmers Old Hazy is £2.02. It's a perfectly decent cider, but such a price for a cider with the modest alcohol content of 5.5% is appalling value compared not just to the free trade but also to other major operators - Wetherspoons will sell you a pint of Westons Bounds Brand, in a similar strength bracket, for £1.75, or cheaper at certain times of the week.

Stop Press: The Midland at Belle Vue no longer sells real ale; however it retains the misleading handpump for keg "Cidermaster" cider.

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- smooth, dark and mellow. Brewed from a recipe almost as old as the brewery itself.

CHOICE BEERS

CAMRA CALLING!

Campaign For Real Ale Branch Diaries
Here are the monthly branch event diaries, starting with Stockport and South Manchester, followed by High Peak and Macclesfield. Members of all branches are welcome at each other's events!

Diary

July 97

Sunday 6th - trip to Bishop's Castle Teal Ale Festival, held in the town's pubs, including two brew-pubs, the Three Tuns and the Six Bells. Minibus leaves Crown, Heaton lane at 10.00am. Book on 477 1973.

Monday 7th - Social, Forgery & Firkin, Mosely Street, City Centre. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 10th - monthly branch meeting, Nursery, Green Lane, Heaton Norris. Starts 8.00pm. **Note change of venue.**

Monday 14th - Social, Greyhound, Bowdon Street, Edgeley. Starts 9.00pm.

Thursday 17th - Pub of the Month presentation to Grey Horse, Portland Street, Manchester. **Note change of date.**

Friday 18th - Stagger in Heaton Chapel and Heaton Moor. Starts 7.00pm, Tut'n'Shive, Manchester Road; 8.30 Crown, Heaton Moor Road.

Monday 21st - Gorton Social: 9.00pm Gardeners Arms, Gorton Lane; 10pm Royal Oak, Cross Lane.

Saturday 26th - day trip to Pontefract area including visit to Tomlinsons Brewery. Book seat on 477 1973.

Sunday 27th - Curry Crawl: 12 noon, Denmark, Moss Lane East; 1.00 Whitworth, Moss La E; 2.00 Albert, Walmer St. Curry to follow.

Monday 28th - Social, Prince Albert, Castle Street, Edgeley. Starts 9.00pm.

July 97

Wednesday 30th - Joint socila with North Manchester branch. Queens Arms, Honey Street, Cheetham. Bar-b-Que in back garden (weather permitting). Starts 8.00pm

Monday 4th August - Social, Red Lion, Wilmslow Road, Withington (vault, if room). Starts 9.00pm

High Peak branch covers Bredbury, Romiley, Woodley, Marple and all pints north. They have advised us of the following events:

Monday 7th - Branch meeting, Duke of York, Romiley. Starts 8.30pm.

Friday 11th - Sunday 13th - **Branch beer tent at Ashton Canals Festival. All welcome.**

Sunday 20th - Walk from Buxton to the Navigation, Buxworth. Contact Frank Wood on 014578 65426 for details.

Wednesday 23rd - Visit Bank Top Brewery, Bolton. Meet Howcroft, Bolton at 8.00pm.

Tuesday 12th August - Branch meeting, Royal, Hayfield. Starts 8.30pm. **Note change of day.**

Apart from Macclesfield and Bollington, the Macclesfield & East Cheshire Branch covers a wide area from Wilmslow to Knutsford and down to Congleton. They have advised us of the following event:

Monday 28th - Monthly branch meeting at the Red Lion, Lower Withington. Starts 8.00pm.

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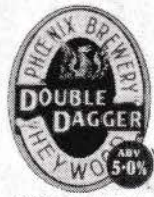
OLD OAK
Well balanced brown beer. Malt and hops balance the strong fruitiness in the aroma and taste. The finish is malty, fruity and dry.



THRISTY MOON
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BONNEVILLE
Light brown bitter. Malty character with a soft rounded hop balance.



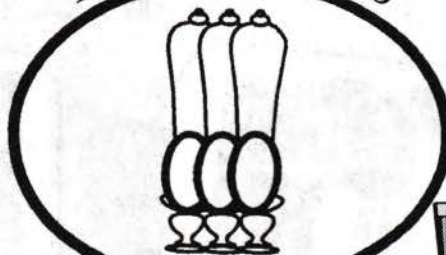
DOUBLE DAGGER
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Last month's snippet about the **Romper** at Ringway brought a swift response from landlady Beryl Keeley. Beryl tells us that despite the rumours we reported, trade is anything but down and she has in fact recently had a pat on the back from Greenalls for doing so well! Beryl is also a licensee of many years experience having worked at pubs as diverse as Stockport's White Lion and Banks's Four in Hand in Didsbury where she was in fact licensee when the pub first opened. All in all she is just the sort of experienced licensee with a genuine love of the trade that the Romper needs. And Greenalls plans for the pub? Well, there may be something, indeterminate and undisclosed, in the long term but certainly nothing is in the pipeline for the foreseeable future. A case of no news being good news, really.

A couple of changes to report in Edgeley. On Castle Street, the Pineapple is once again open but still without any real ale. Better news comes from the Gardeners Arms on Northgate Road where Holts Bitter has returned by popular demand - excellent news indeed. Lastly, Simon Mounkley from the Blossoms is now firmly at the helm of the Prince Albert. - a full report next time.

In the City Centre, the Churchill on Chorlton Street reopened last month as **Churchills**. Sited directly opposite the ultra-swish Mash & Air, the Churchill was, by contrast, a grotty



dump. But no more! The pub has been transformed in traditional style. Out have gone the suspended ceilings to open up the pub interior to its original height, sufficient to accommodate a mezzanine drinking area suspended over the bar. The decor is almost mock-Victorian but in a space this size it actually works. Huge mirrors, lots of pictures, wood and glass complete the effect. Two cask beers are sold - Boddingtons Bitter and Marstons Pedigree. The Boddies was some of the best OT has sampled this year - let's hope the standard is maintained. Full marks to Greenalls (yes, really!) for a job well done.

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